

Indiana Department of Education

Ethical Guidelines and Standards of Practice



Office of Student Services
July 2005

Policy Notification Statement

It is the policy of the Indiana Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability, in its programs, activities, or employment policies as required by the Indiana Civil Rights Law (I.C. 22-9-1), Title VI and VII (Civil Rights Act of 1964), the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX (Educational Amendments), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USCS ss 12101, *et. seq.*).

Inquiries regarding compliance by the Indiana Department of Education with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, Indiana Department of Education, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798, or by telephone to 317-232-6610, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 111 North Canal Street, Suite 1053, Chicago, IL 60606-7204
— **Dr. Suellen Reed, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.**

Student Assistance Programs Ethical Guidelines and Standards of Practice

Philosophy Statement for Student Assistance Programs

A Student Assistance Program is a school comprehensive prevention and intervention program for students in Grades K-12 characterized by a team approach. This professional, systematic process is designed to provide education prevention, early identification, intervention, referral, and support services for students with risk behaviors which are interfering with their education. The positive influence of Student Assistance Programs encourages student success in the school environment, fosters risk reduction, provides a safe environment, and promotes opportunities for knowledge, skill, and attitude development. Key components are developmental curriculum and education, policy, staff and community in service and education, early identification, development of support processes, use of community resources, and ongoing evaluation.

Mission Statement for Student Assistance Programs

The Student Assistance Program utilizes a multidisciplinary team and intervention system to remove the educational and behavioral barriers which interfere with student learning. This goal is accomplished by providing strategies and support to the school community and parents to improve their ability to help students succeed in school. The team also marshals other school and community resources as necessary for an effective intervention.

This document includes ethical guidelines and standards of practice for those people involved in a Student Assistance Program in any capacity. These guidelines are intended to clarify the ethical responsibilities to students, families, school staff, Student Assistance Core Teams, community, school support groups, and the profession for which they serve.

These guidelines were developed to identify the standards of conduct necessary to maintain and regulate the high standards of integrity and leadership among persons involved in Student Assistance Programs. They are meant to stimulate reflection, self-examination, and discussion of issues and practices.

Confidentiality

Those served by the Student Assistance Core Team have a right to privacy. The information gathered and shared by the Student Assistance Core Team is often very personal, sensitive information. Those who have this information are obliged to protect its disclosure to others. Outside of the

team meetings, information can only be disclosed with the expressed, written permission of a student's parents or the student, if the student is 18 years old. There are exceptions to confidentiality, such as in cases of child abuse and harm to self or others. When these exceptions arise, confidentiality must be breached, and the necessary authorities will be informed as required by law.

It will be necessary at times to share information with a referring source, for example, a teacher. The team will need to walk a fine line between client confidentiality and the referring source's need to know that their referral has resulted in appropriate action. The general rule is to disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose. Decisions on what kinds of information will be told to whom should be made by the team or by the Student Services' specialist. From the initial paperwork, through team meetings, and consultations with others, protecting the information gathered on a student cannot be emphasized enough.

Records will be kept on students involved in the Student Assistance Core Program. These records will be kept in a secure location, and access will be limited to those with a need to know. As school records, they must be maintained in accordance with federal and state laws.

Professional Competence

The second cornerstone of ethical behavior is recognizing and working within the limits of one's professional competence. This tenet of ethical behavior is particularly relevant to an intervention system that uses staff not formally credentialed as mental health specialists. As a member of

the team, you must not present yourself as an expert in child mental health. When asked questions or for expert advice, the proper response is to state that the question will be taken to the Student Services' specialist on the team or to the team itself.

A. Responsibilities to Students

Those involved in the Student Assistance Program will:

1. Have primary responsibility to the student, who is to be treated with respect and dignity and with concern for confidentiality.
2. Be responsible to offer Student Assistance components to all students who indicate a need for such services and include all students with risk behaviors.
3. Inform the student of the purposes, goals, and procedures under which he/she may receive Student Assistance. Include the possible necessity for consulting with other professionals and legal or other authoritative restraints.
4. Be responsible for maintaining current knowledge of laws relating to Student Assistance Program practice and ensure the rights of students are adequately protected.
5. Make referrals to appropriate service providers based upon students' needs and monitor students' progress.
6. Protect the confidentiality of student records and exchange personal data only according to prescribed laws and school policies.
7. Provide only accurate, objective, and observable data regarding a student's behavior.
8. Inform appropriate authorities when the student's condition or statements indicate a clear and imminent

danger to the student or others. This is done after careful deliberation and, when possible, in conjunction with other professional consultation.

9. Provide explanation to parents/guardians and those who provide services to the student of the nature, purpose, and results of screening or assessment interviews.
10. Account for each student referred to the Student Assistance Program by continued evaluation of student success and needs and provide additional assistance whenever necessary.

B. Responsibilities to Families

Those involved in the Student Assistance Program will:

1. Have a primary responsibility to the family of the student who is to be treated with respect, dignity, and with concern for confidentiality.
2. Respect the inherent rights and responsibilities of parents for their children and endeavor to establish a cooperative relationship with parents.
3. Inform parents of the role of Student Assistance Programs with emphasis on the positive prevention nature of the program and the role of confidentiality between students, staff, and families.
4. Treat information received from families in a confidential and ethical manner.
5. Share information about a student only with those persons properly authorized to receive such information.
6. Offer ongoing support and collaboration with families for the success of their child.

C. Responsibilities to School Staff

Those involved in the Student Assistance Program will:

1. Establish and maintain a cooperative relationship with faculty, staff, and administration to facilitate the provision of optimum Student Assistance Program services.
2. Promote awareness and adherence to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality and the distinction between public and private information.
3. Provide staff with accurate, objective, and concise data necessary to assist the student.
4. Offer appropriate in service training and current Student Assistance Program information for all staff.
5. Encourage awareness and appropriate use of related professions and organizations to whom the student may be referred.
6. Provide services within their board-approved job descriptions and with an awareness of their specific areas of responsibilities and limitations.

D. Responsibilities to Student Assistance Core Team Members

Those involved with Student Assistance Program Core Teams will:

1. Select multidisciplinary teams based upon the goals and mission of a Student Assistance Core Team as defined by the Indiana Department of Education and implemented within the particular needs of each individual school corporation.
2. Support the components included in the Student Assistance Program with an emphasis upon

prevention, confidentiality, referral, identification, intervention, support, and evaluation.

3. Include team members which meet the guidelines of General Education Interventions (Section 439 of General Education Provisions Act 20 U.S.C. 1232(h) amended 1994, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 34 C.F.R. 104.
4. Select professionals with leadership, communication skills, and expertise which relates to the wide range of issues of youth and family.
5. Act upon referrals to the team by collecting observable data and planning developmentally appropriate levels of interventions.
6. Treat information received from school staff, students, parents, and community resources in a confidential and ethical manner.
7. Maintain records according to the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. - 123(g)) & (34 C.F.R., 99).
8. Provide staff with accurate, objective, and concise data necessary to assist the student.
9. Know and utilize community resources and services for referrals.

E. Responsibility to the School and Community

Those involved in the Student Assistance Program will:

1. Inform appropriate officials of conditions that may be potentially disruptive or damaging to the school's mission, personnel, or property.
2. Work cooperatively with community agencies, organizations, and individuals in the school.
3. Delineate and promote the Student Assistance Program role and function in meeting the needs of

those served.

4. Assist in the development of curricular and environmental conditions and programs appropriate for the school and community to meet student needs.
5. Develop a systematic evaluation process for Student Assistance Programs.
6. Offer ongoing educational opportunities for families and community members regarding issues of our youth.
7. Provide an ongoing cooperative link between school and community services.

F. Responsibilities to School Support Groups

Those involved in the Student Assistance Programs will:

1. Promote awareness and adherence to the Ethical Guidelines for Group Counselors and Professional Standards for the Training of Group Work approved by the Association for Specialists in Group Work.
2. Emphasize that student support groups are psychoeducational and counseling groups not therapy groups.

G. Responsibilities to Student Assistance Profession

Those involved in the Student Assistance Program will:

1. Conduct themselves in such a manner as to bring credit to self and the Student Assistance Program practice.
2. Actively participate in local, state, and national associations which foster development and improvement of Student Assistance programming.
3. Adhere to ethical standards applicable to Student

Assistance Program practices, school board policies, and relevant statutes established by federal, state, and local governments.

4. Clearly distinguish between statements and actions made as a private individual and as a representative of the school Student Assistance Program.

H. Responsibilities to Self

Those involved in the Student Assistance Program will:

1. Monitor one's own physical, mental, and emotional health and professional effectiveness.
2. Refrain from any destructive activity leading to inadequate services or harm to self or a student.
3. Take the personal initiative to maintain professional competence and keep abreast of innovations, trends, and legal issues related to the Student Assistance Programs.
4. Understand and act upon their commitment and responsibility to the Student Assistance Program.

Resources

Counseling

www.counseling.org

"Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice"

Support Groups

www.asgw.org

Association for Specialists in Group Work

Social Work

www.socialworkers.org

"Code of Ethics"

Psychology

www.naspweb.org

"Professional Conduct Manual and Principals for Professional Ethics"

Contact:

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